

Final evaluation of the students - Second meeting in Poland

Tell us about your experiences in Poland:

1. The knowledge you gained (personal, social, related to the subject of our project,...)

"Staying in Poland was one of the most fascinating and amazing weeks of our whole lives. We developed our social skills and for sure our personality, because we got to know people from all five nations and we also learned to interact with strangers when the interviews took place. We obtained knowledge in regards to Poland and especially Opatow, Krakow and Warsaw.

Learning about Jewish people was very interesting; Judeo-Greek, customs, food, music, paintings, art (mandala) etc."

"During our stay in Poland we visited many different places. We had a great opportunity to make new friends. Some of our expectations were accurate, but we also learned about new aspects of Poland. All in all, living in Poland differs considerably from living in our countries. The history of Opatow is much more important for the society than the history of our hometown is for us. Because of that, it was very interesting to visit this city. The underground and also Kirshenblatt's paintings helped us to understand Polish people, especially former Jewish life.

The food in Poland is rather extraordinary. There were a lot of soups, tea, sausage and cheese. All in all we can say that most of the exchange guests liked the food, although it is completely different from the food we're used to eating.

We all got to know many new friends. We learned about their everyday-life, their situations at home and their thoughts about each other. We had great experiences in our free time, for example the campfire evening."

"This week was a good experience because we learned a lot of things about Polish and Jewish culture (food, culture and history). We stayed in host families, and therefore, we learned much about the Polish people, for example, how they live and about their traditions."

"During this project we learned a lot of things. One of these things is that Jewish culture was, and still is, really important for Poland and also for many other countries. We also learned a lot about coming together and working together. We got to know new people from other countries with different cultures and different views."

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"We had the opportunity to learn about different cultures, customs, and to try traditional food. We also made good friendships. We expanded our knowledge in Jewish History after we visited synagogues and museums in Krakow as well as Auschwitz - Birkenau."

2. The feelings/emotions/thoughts you will take home from Poland

"Memories from Poland will stay in our hearts forever. We met new people, made new friends and came in contact with Polish families. This experience made us want to return to Poland again. "

"The stereotypes that we were told collapsed; nothing was strange or surprising apart from the educational system, which is just more developed than we thought it would/could be."

"Generally we can say that in the beginning of the week, we felt kind of strange, but now we are more relaxed and it is funny to think back on. Also, we had a good party at a fireplace, which was a totally different experience."

"This week was an unforgettable experience for us because we met amazing people. We are really proud that we were part of this project and we got the chance to come to Poland."

3. The activities you enjoyed the most

"Krakow's center was fantastic! The church was just gigantic... Overall, Krakow was, is, and will be the cultural heart of Poland!"

"The activities varied for us. We saw a lot of old buildings. We enjoyed the trip to Krakow the most. It was amazing to discover the architecture and be shown the city by such a great guide."

"The old city of Krakow was amazing. We saw many huge beautiful buildings and shops, and we had a great time strolling around. "

4. The experience in Auschwitz

"Visiting Auschwitz was mind-blowing. It made us realise that these kind of crimes MUST NEVER ever happen again! The responsibility lies with us, and by us we mean the whole world!"

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"The trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau was both very shocking and impressive. We had the possibility to realize the horrors of the holocaust and to see it with our own eyes, not only from history books."

"Auschwitz is a shocking place. It was very good to see it, but it was also a very hard experience. Before we visited the concentration camp, we did an interview. Each interviewee told us their different personal stories, but we found out that they all still feel the same way about this shocking experience. "

"The trip to Auschwitz was really impressive, it was also a thing we will never forget because we had never seen such a sad place and it opened our minds to what happened many years ago."

"We think that Auschwitz – Birkenau was really impressive, touching, tragic and in the same time amazing. Auschwitz was one of the most interesting activities; the buildings and everything they included were shocking. The room where all the hair was displayed and the gas chambers reminded us what a tragic experience it was for everyone in the camps."

5. The most surprising thing about your stay in Poland

- The most surprising things for us were: the campfire meeting, the buildings, Kracow/learning Yiddish, Auschwitz-Birkenau
- What seemed strange to us was that the painter Mayer Kirshenblatt started painting at the age of sixty and although he was old and was living in another country, he could still remember everything about his hometown.

6. Choose 3 key words that highlight this experience!

